

YWCA Central Maine Preschool Parent Handbook



2020-2021

Please Note: All YWCA policies and procedures are subject to change in order to be in YWCA adherence with the State of Maine's guidelines/response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Mission

The mission of the YWCA is to **eliminate racism** and **empower women** while promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Founded in 1878, the YWCA began as a service provider for women immigrating to Lewiston to work in the mills. The organization was originally known as the Women's Benevolent Association and offered housing, language classes, job training, and recreation that allowed working women to thrive in their new country. The YWCA's history inspires us to provide programming that builds community through strengthening inter-cultural relationships and valuing the needs and contributions of all of our members.

Our programming is guided by a belief in appreciation of diversity and equitable opportunity for all people in our community. All YWCA services work toward the realization of gender and racial equity through providing accessible and culturally appropriate resources for health and wellness, recreation, childcare, and advocacy. The advancement of women, people of color, and economic justice in Lewiston-Auburn is integral in all that we do. From affordable childcare that supports families and women in the workplace to free-of-charge therapeutic swim programs to anti-racist education and action, the YWCA strives to bring this mission to fruition in big and small ways every day.

YWCA Philosophy

The YWCA is committed to providing a healthy environment for all children while promoting self-esteem, enthusiasm for learning, and respect for oneself and others. The YWCA offers the opportunity for growth through a variety of programs and activities, which may include:

- Freely expressing oneself through play, music, art, and dance;
- A love for reading;
- Nurturing the imagination;
- Gender equality;
- Learning to take care of basic personal needs;
- Listening and communication skills;
- Sharing;
- Cultural diversity;
- Promoting our local community through field trips and special visitors;
- Weekly structured swim;
- Nutrition and physical activity.

Expectations of Program Participants (Parents and Children)

In order to provide this atmosphere to our program participants, the YWCA enforces some basic rules. These rules include:

- 1. Everyone will respect the personal space of all children and staff at the YWCA.**
- 2. Everyone will use appropriate language at all times at the YWCA (e.g. no swearing, name-calling, or references to dangerous activities, drugs, alcohol, or sexual language.)**
- 3. Everyone will be respectful of everyone's property, including property that belongs to the YWCA.**

Teacher-to-Child Ratio

Staffing ratios in our child care program are regulated by the State of Maine. The adult-to-child ratio for preschool depends on the age of the children in the classroom and is either one adult to every seven children (1:7) or one adult for every 10 children (1:10).

Preschool Classrooms

We currently operate three preschool classrooms, named after Winnie the Pooh characters. Age ranges for the classrooms are general guidelines; Children are placed in a room based on room availability at the time of enrollment and the individual needs of the child. Children move from one classroom to another as they get older based on availability and teacher and parent input.

Classroom	Age Range
Tigger's Tree House	2 ½ - 4 years
Pooh's Corner	3 - 4 years
Christopher Robin's Clubhouse	4 years - kindergarten enrollment

Hours of Operation

The hours of operation for all classrooms are 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Parents who require care for their children prior to 7:00 AM or after 5:30 PM may be able to sign up for extended care.

Arrival Time

Children may not arrive prior to 7:00 AM unless they are signed up for extended care hours (*see below*). If you bring your child in prior to 7:00 AM, you will have to wait with your child until programming begins. If your child is not going to attend the YWCA for care on a scheduled day, please call the front desk at 795-4050 and let them know.

Pick-Up Time

All children must be picked up by 5:30 PM unless they are signed up for extended care hours (*see below*). Please call the front desk at 795-4050 to notify them if you will be unable to pick your child up on time.

Extended Care

Families may be able access extended care for their child(ren), which is from 6:30 – 7:00 AM and 5:30 – 6:00 PM. The fee for extended care is \$15.⁰⁰ per week for the morning and \$15.⁰⁰ per week for the evening. Please see the Director of Child Care Services to inquire about whether extended care services are available.

Late Fees

Families who are not signed up for extended care and pick their children up past 5:30 PM will be charged \$10.⁰⁰ for each child for each late pick up. This fee will be assessed and added to your invoice to be paid with the next regular invoicing period and is subject to the same conditions as regular tuition.

Permission for Pick-Up

All people with permission to pick up a child from the YWCA, including parents, must be listed in the child's enrollment paperwork. YWCA staff is instructed to check photo

identification of any adults they are unfamiliar with who may be picking up a child. Please notify your child's teacher and provide written permission in the event that someone who is not already listed will be picking up your child.

Early Closing/Delayed Opening

The YWCA does not automatically close when local schools are canceled due to inclement weather. If the YWCA decides to open late or close early due to inclement weather, an emergency situation, or another reason, the notification will be broadcast on local television stations and social media.

Hours of Operation – Snow Days/Emergency School Closure

If school is closed for inclement weather or other unplanned reasons, the options for childcare are from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Extended care hours are not offered on those days.

Tuition and Fees

All children who attend the YWCA Central Maine childcare are required to have an active Community Access Pass. This is a \$40.⁰⁰ pass which provides membership benefits and is valid for a period of one year. Each child's Community Access Pass must be renewed on an annual basis.

A \$25.⁰⁰ registration fee is required when a child is signed up for a new program (e.g. summer camp, enrollment in preschool or school age child care).

Termination of Care

Occasionally, a child will experience some difficulty in acclimating to the center's environment or abiding by the rules of behavior set up by the center.

If the rules and policies set forth are not followed, the YWCA reserves the right to terminate the childcare contract agreement at any time. In such an event, parents will be billed through the end of the week in which such termination occurs. Possible reasons for suspension and/or termination from the program include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to comply with policies set forth in the parent handbook;
- A child's destructive or hurtful behavior that persists, even with parent cooperation in stopping the behavior;
- Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff;
- Non-payment of childcare or late fees and/or recurring late payments of fees.

To avoid termination or suspension, teachers and staff will meet with the families to discuss the means to help with the situation. The Director of Childcare Services may also recommend additional supportive services and/or make referral(s) for services when deemed necessary, which may include consultation, educator training, evaluation, etc. If a child is suspended or terminated after exhausting all opportunities for sustaining enrollment, the program will provide the parent or guardian with the specific conditions in which the child may return, if any.

Voluntary Termination of /Withdrawing Your Child From Care

Parents are required to provide the YWCA with a two weeks' written notice when voluntarily withdrawing children from YWCA Central Maine Childcare. Parents will be responsible for all final payments through the end of the notice period, whether their child is in attendance or not.

Visitation and Parental Concerns

At the YWCA, we encourage visitation and welcome you to visit your child at any time, in adherence with State of Maine COVID-19 Response Guidelines. Concerns about how conflicts are handled, or questions about routines and procedures, may be addressed with your child's classroom teacher at any time. In addition, you may also contact the Director of Child Care to discuss YWCA policies, licensing questions, and rules associated with the child care programs overall.

Clothing

Please send your child to the YWCA with adequate clothing for the weather. Dressing them in or providing them with layers is recommended. The children here spend a significant amount of their time outside releasing energy and getting exercise. It is recommended that you label all of your child's personal belongings with his or her name, as the YWCA will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen items. Children should have shoes that will stay on their feet during outdoor play. Providing an extra set of clothing in their backpack is recommended.

Aquatics

As water safety is an essential life skill, aquatics are a fundamental part of programming at the YWCA. Preschool students participate in swim two times per week, with one structured swim lesson and one session of free swim. ***Please pack a bathing suit, towel, and water shoes for your child on his/her scheduled swim days*** (as well as swim diapers for children who are not yet potty trained). If you are able, please provide a Coast Guard approved life jacket (labeled with your child's name) to keep here at the YWCA. The YWCA aquatics program provides a certified lifeguard who is on duty whenever the children are in the pool area.

Rest Time

Per Maine State Child Care Licensing Rules, preschool children are required to participate in rest time each day. The YWCA will provide children with individual mats. ***Please send a blanket and pillow for your child to use during rest time.*** It is expected that blankets and pillows are bought home to be washed each Friday and returned to the YWCA for use on Monday morning.

Food & Nutrition Program

The YWCA participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. **All children who attend child care at the YWCA will receive the same nutritious meals and snacks, regardless of income.**

Snacks and Meals

Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are provided to all children free of charge, regardless of income. Breakfast is served at approximately 8:30 AM, and lunch is served at approximately 11:30 AM. Snacks are served after rest time.

Outside Food

Treats for parties/celebrations must be store bought and in the original packaging. Please inform the kitchen staff and/or your child's teacher if you intend to bring treats for your child to share. Healthy choices are appreciated, and a healthy treat suggestion list is available upon request.

Food & Nutrition Program – USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Food & Nutrition Program – State of Maine Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin.

Complaints of discrimination must be filed at the office of the Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0051. If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, visit the Human Rights Commission website

at <https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/file/instructions> and complete an intake questionnaire. Maine is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Field Trips

Occasionally the children may go on trips to playgrounds, museums, beaches and other fun places. Parents will be notified in advance of any planned trips and will need to sign a permission slip in order for their child to attend. The handling of medical conditions during these trips is governed by State law and involves requires forms, etc. There may be additional costs associated with field trips, such as admission or transportation fees.

Transportation

Children will not be transported to or from the YWCA without signed parental permission, except in the case of an emergency.

Physical Activity

Children attending the YWCA will be participating in many physical games and activities each day. They will have an opportunity to swim twice per week most weeks, and the children will go outside to play daily as weather allows. Gross motor activities will take place in the gym and/or classroom on cold or rainy days.

Electronic Equipment and Toys

Children are not allowed to bring video games or electronic devices of any kind to the YWCA. This includes, but is not limited to, tablets, Game Boys, PSPs, Nintendo DS, MP3 players, cell phones, etc. Also, in an effort to prevent loss of and damage to personal toys, please do not bring toys from home into the classroom with your child. The YWCA will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Screen Time

It is very important to us at the YWCA that the children spend their time here developing social skills, practicing problem solving skills, and engaging in physical activity. As such, no computer time will take place for children at the YWCA, and TV/movie time will be limited to special occasions or rainy days.

Illnesses

Please do not send your child to the YWCA if he/she is ill, vomiting, or has a fever. The YWCA does not have a nurse on staff, and the health and safety of other children and adults in the building is of utmost importance. Children attending child care at the YWCA must be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play and swim. Below is a list of symptoms that may prevent your children from participating in YWCA child care:

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Unexplained rash
- ✓ Persistent cough
- ✓ Profuse discharge of discolored mucus from nose or eyes
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Vomiting

- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Head lice
- ✓ Other signs of contagious illness

If a child appears listless, feverish, or ill while attending the YWCA, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child. If a parent cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be called. Once a child is sent home sick, they may not return to the YWCA until they are free from the particular symptoms or concern. A doctor's note may be requested.

Medication

In order for YWCA staff to administer prescription or over the counter medication to your child, a signed permission form must be on file. Medications kept at the YWCA must be in the original container with dosing instructions. Medications will be kept locked up and administered by authorized child care staff only.

Sunscreen

Children may be asked to apply sunscreen on themselves multiple times per day on warm, sunny days. Please send your child with a labeled bottle of sunscreen to protect them from the sun's harmful rays during outdoor play.

Managing Problem Behaviors

The YWCA Child Care program concentrates on rewarding and reinforcing children's creative work and positive behavior. The more opportunities a child has for building confidence and skills for self-expression in an atmosphere of approval, the better and more positive the experience will be for all children.

Guiding Principles for Discipline

There are three principles that guide consequences in the classrooms at the YWCA with regard to negative behaviors. These principles are:

Natural Consequences: Natural consequences are those things that happen in response to your child's behavior without parental/teacher involvement. These are imposed by nature, society, or another person. An example of a natural consequence would be a child missing out on the beginning of an activity because he or she was not listening to the instructions.

Proportion: The severity of the consequence should match the degree of seriousness of the negative behavior. For example, a minor or unintentional shove will result in a less severe consequence than hitting with the intent to injure.

Progressive Discipline: The nature of consequences will progress if disruptive behavior worsens or is not modified by typical strategies. Examples of consequences are listed below.

Hierarchy of Consequences

If a child is unable to follow the YWCA's basic rules, clear and firm consequences will be used and communicated to remind the child and to help redirect potentially disruptive behavior toward a more constructive solution. Simple reminders are used first, with suggestions of how to change and move toward the positive. More restrictive

consequences, such as taking time away from an activity, are employed when simple reminders are not effective. General reminders of all rules are conveyed periodically with the entire class. If your child is having difficulty following the YWCA rules more than occasionally, his or her teacher will likely enlist your help in reinforcing these concepts at home.

Property Damage

If a child damages property at the YWCA or in the community while in the care of the YWCA, that child's parent(s) will be held financially responsible for the damages. If damage occurs in a community facility, their rules for covering damages may also apply.

Removal from the Program

The YWCA reserved the right to withdraw a participant from the program if all discipline options have been exhausted and/or demonstration of extreme behavior that may put participants and staff in danger. *The YWCA will not refund any paid tuition for those who are denied services due to disciplinary reasons.*

Coronavirus

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the YWCA will be instituting emergency policies and/or procedures that may differ from the handbook. Changes will be shared with families in writing and will override those in the handbook.